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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the mission statement of a small liberal arts college: (1) to establish a rationale for examining a mission statement from a postmodern perspective, which will aid in the understanding of the context within which the mission statement and accompanying goals were developed and produced; (2) to clarify the multiple voices and readings of the rhetorical act, by identifying the ultimate terms used in the act and the clusters associated with them; and (3) to identify conflicts among various voices in the statement. The paper examines the statement and goals by deconstructing the text, context, and readers of the rhetorical act. Using Kenneth Burke's method of discovering ultimate terms and cluster analysis, the paper identifies terms directed at specific readers. And, through the enlightened lens produced by the deconstruction and cluster analysis, the paper discusses the conflicts of power existing in the mission statement. It points out that the college studied developed a statement of their "new" mission and goals as an introduction to the revised general education curriculum package intended to "take students into the 21st century." The paper finds that, in presenting a text to serve multiple readers, the message is diluted, occupying a dual position of change and tradition. The paper notes that those involved in the production of the rhetoric of higher education must realize the rhetorical implications that affect them either success or failure as they present themselves to the multiple voices that constitute modern society. Contains 29 references. (NKA)

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# Postmodern Perspectives and Burkean Clusters in Higher Education:

## The Analysis of a Mission Statement

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Postmodern Perspectives and Burkean Clusters in Higher Education

The Analysis of a Mission Statement

*The medium is the message—the sender is the receiver....such is the alpha and omega of our modernity.*

Baudrillard 1994

American institutions of higher education exist today in a realm where meaning is uncertain (Derrida, 1991), where concepts of knowledge are in flux (Lyotard, 1984), where image is everything (Baudrillard, 1994), and where time (the 21st century) forces revision. Presidents of colleges and universities act as bankers (Jacoby, 1991) rather than with probity (Ivins, 1996) and the "greening of the university" (Jacoby, 1991) with corporate and government dollars is an everyday occurrence. University management styles are based on corporate America (Wendt, 1994), often with administrative offices and separate disciplines run under Total Quality Management Programs. With this commodification of higher education comes the student as consumer metaphor (McMillan and Cheney, 1996). McMillan and Cheney (1996) think of this metaphor as the"McEducation" concept. Add to this already complex picture the downsizing underway in many American businesses, and you have the tapestry in which the modern institution of higher education is woven.

A cacophony of voices speak within these institutions of higher learning. Regents and administrators, faculty and departments, parents and alumni, traditional and non-traditional students, community, government and business all give voice to the multiplicity of functions that characterize colleges and universities of today ( Pierce, 1996). Outside the university, the changing social and political climate place further pressure on traditional university functions.

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Pierce (1996) describes a climate favoring litigation, separatism, and political correctness at the expense of freedom of speech, and the "spirited examination of ideas" (p.6). "Pressure from multiple constituencies makes it difficult for colleges and universities to move beyond talk to action" says Pierce (1996, p. 3). Ironically, action and change is what is needed to move American higher education into the twenty-first century.

The Association of American Colleges (1994), suggests that with each new generation of faculty and students, colleges must answer the question "What is special about our students, our institution, our education?" (p.9). With the multiplicity of voices described previously, this question becomes more difficult to answer with each asking. Ideally, the answer becomes the mission statement of the institution. The mission statement should as Pierce (1996) suggests, "establish a sense of purpose" (p. 6). It should be, "a living and vibrant educational vision" the American Association of Colleges (1994) believes, "solidly grounded... in its sense of public purpose" ( p.7). The mission statement becomes a powerful rhetoric, exemplifying the institution, and guiding it as it responds to the multiple voices shouting from within and without its boundaries.

The rhetoric of higher education and context that produces that rhetoric become one. The readers/voices of the mission statement are numerous--all connected and disjoined simultaneously. It is helpful to the development of a clear understanding of the rhetoric of higher education to place it within the context of its production and to discover and describe all possible readings of that rhetoric.

This essay examines the mission statement and goals of a small liberal arts college. The goal of this essay is first, to establish a rationale for examining the mission statement from



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a postmodern cultural perspective. The postmodern perspective will aid in the understanding of the context within which the mission statement and accompanying goals were developed and produced. Second, the essay seeks to clarify the multiple voices and readings of the rhetorical act, by identifying the ultimate terms used in the act and the clusters associated with them. Third, the essay identifies conflicts between various voices in the statement. And finally, the essay makes judgements on the degree of success with which the mission statement accurately reflects the institution it represents.

The examination of the mission statement and goals is accomplished with the deconstruction of the text, context, and readers of the rhetorical act. Using Burke's method of discovering ultimate terms and cluster analysis, the essay identifies terms directed at specific readers. And, through the enlightened lens produced by the deconstruction and cluster analysis, the essay discusses the conflicts of power existing in the mission statement.

The liberal arts college studied in this essay developed a statement of their "new" mission and goals as an introduction to the revised general education curriculum package that they believe will "take students into the twenty-first century" (Drury, 1995). The mission statement of this particular college was chosen for study for several reasons. First, the author received her undergraduate degree from this institution, attending during the time the college was developing the new mission and general education curriculum. Second, the author served as student representative on several faculty committees, participated in a faculty development seminar, and authored a series of articles for the Drury Mirror, all of which provided the author with the opportunity to interview both faculty , administration and students who participated in the development of the new mission and curriculum.

The author's interest was piqued by the heated debate between administration and faculty, between students and faculty, between faculty and faculty (ie. departmental and pedagogical) and between community and regents, as they initiated, developed and presented the college's new mission and general education curriculum. In the end, the mission statement became a fusion of all the competing voices in the college. True to deconstructionist thought, the possibility of complete understanding of all meanings incorporated in the statement is impossible. That does not make the examination useless. It is perhaps, this impossibility of understanding that is the power of deconstruction.

## Building The Postmodern Context

This section of the essay places higher education in the postmodern context and establishes a rationale for looking at the mission statement of Drury college from a deconstructionist perspective.

The values that shape our lives, determine which politicians we elect, what products we buy, and the possessions, both intrinsic and extrinsic, that we hold dear, are created by and within our culture. What is our culture today? Those outside academia would likely use the descriptive adjective"modern" to describe our culture. A culture that places value as Steele and Redding (1962) describe, on Puritan morals-- individual rights, equality, success, progress, effort, and practicality. Modernism as Bloland (1995) suggests, "has long been considered the basis for the emancipation of men and women from the bonds of ignorance.....championing democracy....promis[ing] freedom, equality, justice, the good life, and prosperity ....modernism equates change with progress" (p. 523). These values have long been taught and exemplified in the educational institutions in our society. These values are products of modernism. Bloland (1995) believes that institutions of higher education are "deeply immersed" (p.522) in modernism and the "ideals, institutions and vocabulary" (524) that are the hallmarks of that perspective. The values noted by Steele and Redding (1962) that are embedded as Bloland (1995) suggests, in higher education are presently in flux. The terms modernism and postmodernism, as used to describe the characteristics of culture are, as Bloland (1995) believes ambiguous, but necessary.

Scholars (Bloland, 1995; Jameson, 1984; Poster, 1989) agree that the contemporary world is rife with confusion. As Bloland (1995) suggests,"economic, political, and social

changes" (p. 523) occurring in "everyday life, popular culture..industry , business, and education" (p.523) create an atmosphere that screams for order. We seek to establish this order by "mapping" the confusion cognitively as Jameson (1984) suggests, in an effort to "grasp our positioning" as individuals within society. In that respect, the terms modernism and postmodernism find their purpose. And as Jameson (1984) conveys, the theories of poststructuralism provide a key to the "mapping" of the confusion felt in our postmodern society.

Theoretically speaking, modernism is a humanist perspective that places people as the subjects and objects of knowledge (Bloland, 1995). Modernism also works within the rational paradigm. There is, in the modernist theory, a metanarrative that excludes all paradigms but the rational. As Bloland (1995) suggests, "modernism requires faith that there are universals that can be discovered through reason, that scientific methods are means for arriving at truth...that language describes and can be used...as a means to access...reality" (p. 523). The values described by Steele and Redding (1962) are direct reflections of modernism. Institutions of higher education in America were built on the metanarrative of modernism (Bloland, 1995).

Since the 1970s, voices rising up from within institutions of higher education (Lyotard, 1984; Baudrillard, 1994; Derrida, 1991; Foucault, 1985; Poster, 1989; and Bloland, 1995) have criticized modernism . These scholars join others with similar views, to form the postmodern perspective. Postmodernism, a "critique of Western reason" (Poster, 1989, p. 5) rejects the metanarrative, pointing to the inability of scientific methods and rationalism to produce and predict precisely (Bloland, 1995). Postmodernism warns that all things must be viewed within their context, taking into account the power structures that affect them (Lyotard, 1984). Postmodernism as Bloland (1995) describes, rejects the concept that humanity is the center of

knowledge and that history can be understood as a smoothly changing narrative. Postmodernism "zeroes in on hierarchies" (Bloland, 1995, p. 525) of any kind seeing them as unnatural and bestowing power. Finally, postmodernism argues that because of all these previously stated criticisms, meaning is never concrete, always changing and multiple in nature (Derrida, 1991). Institutions of higher education, part and product of modernism, offer sanctuary to the scholars that form the postmodern perspective (Bloland, 1995).

Universities are, in essence, devouring themselves. They attack the metanarrative they have traditionally represented. This situation presents a compelling reason to view the mission statement from a postmodern perspective. Another rationale for considering the rhetoric of higher education through a postmodern lens is apparent in the work of Perelman and Lyotard.

Perelman (1969) suggests that education endeavors to make certain values preferred to others. Lyotard (1984) believes that "knowledge cannot survive unchanged"(p.4). Working with these assumptions, higher education has provided the education and so the value system that now must change in order for the university to survive. Bloland (1995) describes a state where faith in higher education is questioned as a result of the rejection of modernism. When scientific principles no longer provide constant "true" knowledge, what does the university have to offer? So, as the university seeks to change the values they teach, they fight the loss in faith, of their ability to do so. This presents another intriguing postmodern question.

A final rationale reflects the positive aspects of postmodern culture and deconstructionist methodology. Corcoran (1983) , believes that "in the United States, many information channels have the capacity to activate a national hierarchy of values, from which specific statements or claims or decisions...can be generated" (p. 305). Building on Malinowski's

work on culture, Corcoran (1983) believes this hierarchy rests on a "conventionally-accepted body of narrative...which dictates belief, defines ritual, and acts as a chart of the social order" (p. 306). The rhetoric of higher education falls squarely into this channel. For example, educational institutions begin teaching values to our children early in life. The teachers and administrators that develop curriculum for primary and secondary schools, are themselves trained by the institutions of higher education and thus schooled in the values, rituals and beliefs described above. This establishes higher education as a information channel with the power to develop and perpetuate a certain value structure.

Building on this premise, the power of the college mission statement is put into proper perspective. Such a powerful document demands close scrutiny. As postmodern scholars note, to deny the power in a discourse does not make the power go away (Poster 1989). So, as Lyotard advocates let us have a "celebration of multiple, competing discourses and an acceptance of the justice of the *differend*" (Poster, 1989, p.27). And, as Jameson, let us praise the "cognitive mapping" (Poster 1989, p. 29) provided by the postmodern perspective and the deconstructionist methodology and by doing so, neutralize our "spatial and social confusion" (p.29)--a characteristic of the multiple and competing voices we hear.

## The Mission Statement

According to the Association of American Colleges (1994), some 80% of colleges and universities across the country are making major revisions in missions statements, goals, curricula, and general education courses. These changes follow themes of renewed critical thinking, community, cultural diversity, global interests, public service and an affirmation of new values, ethics and creativity, and are thus statements of postmodern culture.

Colleges are restating their mission and goals to present a new image of the university and a new set of values to be used to judge the education they provide their students. Keep in mind though, as Lyotard (1984) warns, that conversations in an institution have certain constraints. These constraints include; 1)" there are things that should not be said," 2)"there are things that should be said and there are ways of saying them," and 3)"that the boundaries surrounding these things only stabilize when they cease to be stakes in the game" (Lyotard, 1984, pp. 17).

The forces of postmodern culture are at work during the construction of missions statements, curriculum development, and the development of the rhetoric that will present and sell the college to perspective students. These students come to education with aspirations of success, progress, and achievement which they expect to attain with the skills and knowledge they acquire at college. The corporate structure present at many universities and the importance of practical job skills in a tough labor market set a "producer/consumer" stage on which to act out higher education. A competing, polysemous atmosphere is the context and the text of the rhetoric of higher education.

Following is the text from the 1995 catalog of Drury College. The text is included so that the reader can develop a personal understanding of the text as well as an understanding of other readings that might be present.

The Mission Statement

Drury College was founded to prepare students for successful careers though a liberal arts education. Drury's founders recognized the need for a college which would bring the New England liberal arts tradition to a Midwestern setting. The tradition includes a commitment to helping students learn to serve their communities and the world.

For over 122 years, the mission has remained the same. Students gain the knowledge, experience, and skills for graduate school, professional school and careers.

Drury has, however, grown in size and complexity since those early years, adding resources, graduate studies and a number of professional programs to the traditional liberal arts. At the same time, there is an emphasis on excellent teaching, low student faculty ratio, small classes and opportunities for students to engage in individual research.

The hallmark of Drury College is a tradition of excellence which combines effective career preparation with the liberal arts. Those traditions and purposes are set forth in the mission statement:

**Mission**

Drury is an independent college, church-related, grounded in the liberal arts tradition and committed to personalized education in a community of scholars who value the arts of teaching and learning.

**Education at Drury Seeks**

* to cultivate spiritual sensibilities and imaginative faculties as well as ethical insight and critical thought;
* to foster the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge; and
* to liberate persons to participate responsibly in and contribute to life in a global community.

**Goals**

To insure that liberal arts knowledge and understanding is central to the Drury experience and fundamental to all programs, the college maintains and strengthens its commitment to:

* develop the abilities of all students to:
  think critically, communicate effectively, empathize, make mature value judgements
  exhibit personal and social responsibility and chart a healthy course for life;
* insure that all graduates are familiar with the Western tradition, its history, great ideas, and significant artifacts;
* provide students with an opportunity for in-depth study;
* integrate theoretical and applied learning in all programs.

To become a model of a global community in which the best values of the liberal arts and Judeo-Christian traditions govern, the college is dedicated to:

* providing an environment which affirms the equality and worth of all peoples;
* focusing upon the diversity of human culture, language, history and experience;
* creating a co-curricular environment supportive of development of the whole person intellectually, socially, morally, emotionally, physically and spiritually;
* preparing students for a time of significant global adjustment by strengthening their understanding of science and technology, their perception of the interrelatedness of all things, their appreciation for beauty in nature and the built world, and their love of truth and freedom.

The text is an introduction to the new general education curriculum labeled "Global Perspectives 21." Information gathered during interviews with twelve students, eight faculty and one administrator of Drury college provides the initial insight for a beginning reading of the text.

The college appears on the list of top ten small liberal arts colleges in the Midwest. Every student interviewed, said they chose the college because of this reputation. Faculty also chose to teach at the school because of its position of respectability in the academic world and liberal arts tradition. Administrators believed it was time to revise the mission of the college and prepare for the twenty-first century.

A large portion of the middle to upper-middle class student population are second and third generation of alumni, many attend professional schools and most are politically conservative. The mission statement must reflect this consumer base. However, the faculty represent a lower socio-economic level then most of the students and are more liberal politically. The authors of the mission statement, the faculty and administration, are writing to more than one audience--they speak to both the students and themselves. If as Baudrillard (1994) says, the sender is the receiver, then the mission statement is also an instrument of definition for the faculty and administration and so must satisfy two very different audiences. One reader is a conservative consumer defined by the job market, the other a liberal intellectual defined by their academic position and yet another the administration and the board of regents.

Faculty, administrators and students alike contributed authorship to the mission statement with administration having the final word. The multiple authorship of this document lends it to a postmodern deconstructionist examination. The text and the context become one.

## Deconstruction and Cluster Analysis

As Murfin (1993) notes, the deconstructionist's perspective of rhetorical analysis acknowledges that texts can have intertwined and yet opposite discourses. In fact, Murfin (1993) suggests, to say that there is only one reading of a text "gives privileged status to a particular set of rules of reading" (p.331). It is apparent that the complexity of viewpoints that found voice in the mission statement must be viewed from a deconstructionist's perspective.

Postmodern scholars agree that language reveals oppositions and maintains multiple possibilities. Deconstructionist criticism will allow the inclusion of these differing messages and thus provide the clearest and most enlightening analysis of the mission statement.

Burkean scholar, James Chesebro, (1992) suggests that Burke's system of rhetorical analysis is an open one, inviting extensions, and evolving with the contributions of others. At the Kenneth Burke Society Convention held the weekend of Burke's 93rd birthday, members of a seminar entitled, Kenneth Burke and Postmodernism, worked to define the concepts of postmodernism, poststructuralism and how they related to Burke's work. They reached several conclusions (Bertelsen, 1990).

First they noted several characteristics of postmodern analysis; postmodern analysis focuses on "multiple and contradictory meanings conveyed by rhetoric"(p.2), postmodern analysis attends to ideological and political dimensions and the "continuous confrontations between a dominant and emerging ...rhetoric"(p.2). Second, they connected postmodernism with poststructuralism. The first is a "cultural time-bound system" the second is a methodological approach to study all forms of literature"(p.2). The goals of postmodern criticism are to 'liberate the oppressed' through examination of power structures, by deconstructing the rhetoric of

institutions. They concluded that "postmodern and poststructural perspectives can increase the flexibility and utility of Burkean concepts....providing a second orientation to rhetoricians"(p.3).Burke himself noted, "the way we live changes our bodies and therefore how we communicate"(p.3) so, "because we each live differently and understand differently, the same message can mean different things" (Bertelsen, 1990). In this light Burke's concepts of ultimate terms, cluster analysis, and transcendence are employed to "reflect and extend postmodern theories of communication" (Chesebro, 1992, p.365).

So, to further establish the oppositions found in the mission statements Burke's concepts of transcendence are used. As Burke (1952) states, "When approached from a certain point of view, A and B are 'opposites'. We mean by 'transcendence' the adoption of another point of view from which they cease to be opposites" (p. 336).

Burke's ideas on identification follow directly from this conception of transcendence. In A Rhetoric of Motives, (1952) Burke describes a "complicated kind of identification" accented by agreement on an "ultimate" term that can be reached by two opposites (p.19). Burke suggests that often in rhetoric, we "reduce" to an ultimate term that is wider in scope (p.20). So, even though A and B are opposites, they are consubstantial in their identification with the ultimate term. A and B are subsumed in an agreement with a highly abstract term. In this concept, which is critical to the reading of the mission statement, "Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man's very essence" (Burke, 1952, p. 22).

Next Burke makes the distinction between the words that form in clusters as species of the ultimate term. These words are either"positive"--representing something tangible or

"fictitious entities"--representing ideas (Burke, 1952, p. 185). These fictitious entities are dialectical and reflect the competing voices in rhetoric. Enter the unifying ultimate term. This term pulls the competing voices into a "developmentally ....arranged...hierarchy" (p.187) providing a "unitary principle" to the diverse voices (p.187).

To help in the development of various readings of the text, cluster analysis provides over-arching categories from which to build the various readings of the text. As Burke (1937) suggests, we can "....survey the hills and valleys of our mind" (p.76), see through the "lie" of the speaker, and get cues as to the important ingredients subsumed in 'symbolic mergers'" (p.77) through the use of cluster analysis.

One of the beauties of Burke's work, as Chesebro (1992) points out, is the openness of the concepts. Consequently scholars have interpreted Burke's method individually and creatively to examine and analyze a variety of rhetorical acts in diverse settings.

Berthold (1976) describes a method of selecting "god" and "devil" and "good" terms that appear frequently and with intensity in a text. God terms, Berthold (1976) explains, "demand sacrifice in a material sense" (p.303). Good terms cluster around god terms and are highly sanctioned by society.

Jamieson (1980) notes the importance of metaphor in cluster analysis by pointing out the importance of "clusters of related metaphors which reveal the rhetor's projected relationship with his audience" (p.52). The metaphor is, Jamieson (1980) suggests, "a vehicle for teaching complex truths to a popular audience" (p.53). She also notes the potential usefulness of cluster analysis as providing a view of how the metaphors and thus the rhetorical position, of a speaker or institution change over time.

Brummett, (1983) in an analysis of political rhetoric, employs Burke's concepts of frames of acceptance, transcendence and ultimate terms. Brummett's (1982) method is sequential beginning with the position or frame in which one exists. When confronting contradictions we often act to resolve them by, as Brummett (1982) suggests, "symbolically erecting a 'higher synthesis' (or frame) that helps us to accept" (p.549) the contradictions. This new frame includes all competing positions within the rhetoric. All dialectical relationships are subsumed by acceptance of this ultimate term.

## Analysis

This essay uses the steps outlined by Brummett (1982) to perform its analysis. First, the frame of acceptance or position of each voice in the mission statement is identified. Second, an ultimate term of consubstantiality is selected and examined. Third, the ultimate term is viewed in relation to each voice. Finally, the ultimate term is examined as it connects both successfully and unsuccessfully to other terms in the mission statement.

Pierce (1996) suggested that colleges and universities in America today are pulled in a hundred directions. They are called upon to provide support for the community and businesses; provide education, social guidance, emotional support, and spiritual development; and in many cases act as "surrogate parents" (p. 3). It is easy to hear the call of each of these voices in the mission statement of Drury College. Apparent are two over-arching voices in the text, the university and the outside world. Within the university category resides the administration, various disciplines, faculty, regents, and students. The outside world category includes, students, alumni, parents, the business world, the community and government. Though the text may not refer to these groups specifically, their participation in the rhetorical act and presence

in the context of the act is an unspoken aspect of the text. The competing voices all bring their respective desires and ideas to be addressed and developed in the rhetoric of the mission statement. There is competion within each category as well as between categories. But, a mission statement is not the place to present and develop the competition and tensions that exist between groups.

Tensions existing, between the groups represented in the over-arching categories and within the groups of each category, are often only implied in the text of the mission statement. Making the mission statement, as Corcoran (1983) suggests, an "enduring enthymeme" (p.306) that has no set of binary oppositions on which to compare or argue.

Several of the specific tensions represent the postmodern perspective. The tension created in the text between, individual / community, teaching / research, private / public, Western tradition / diversity, and Judeo-Christian / global, are all, in essence, modern / postmodern tensions. These tensions are deeply felt by the university as it critiques itself and the values held by the modern perspectives on which it was founded.

Other tensions center around the students and the outside world category. These are tensions between, liberated / imprisoned (implied), practical / theoretical, university / college, faculty / student, and successful careers / failure (implied). These tensions affect the readings of the text by any and all members of the outside world category.

The university reading of the text might go something like this....'We provide a successful career' which to the faculty might mean a broad, liberal education with critical thinking skills, ethics and values. The administration might read this as....we provide the basics necessary to continue on to professional school. The regents might read this as....we offer our

clients the skills to get a job. Outside world readers may anticipate any one of the previous readings depending on their desires and motives for attending the college. Readers looking for broad, liberal arts, see that meaning. Readers planning to attend professional school see 'successful career' as the entrance to professional school. Business leaders read 'successful career' as the possession of practical, job related skills. The meanings are multiple.

The identification of multiple and competing readings is but the first step in analyzing the rhetoric of higher education. As Chesebro (1992) explains, Burke believed that rhetorical motive is "often present where it is not usually recognized, or thought to belong" ( p.357). He goes on to suggest that rhetoric is "ultimately designed to create a universal philosophy" (p.367). With these two Burkean thoughts in mind we move to the identification of the ultimate term--the term the college uses in an attempt to create a "universal philosophy".

Brummett (1982) suggests that the first step in ultimate term selection is determination of the frame in which the system uses to gauge a situation. In this situation the frame is higher education strained by a multiple, competing constituency. Or, perhaps more simply, education. In this situation, the college is the power player. They possess the knowledge and power and they will provide the powerless student with the knowledge and power for certain stipulated concessions. We have a situation that Brummett (1982) calls the haves and the have nots. This is just one example of a power imbalance that must be rectified by unifying under the ultimate term.

Having already sketched the possible readings of the mission statement by the competing parties involved in higher education a term must be chosen that will allow all competing parties to transcend their individual competing frames to a plane where they can

agree. The term that exemplifies that level of agreement is "tradition." "Tradition" becomes the point of "consubstantiality" (Burke, 1952, p. 21) where all competing voices can meet in an abstract agreement on what is happening in the frame of Drury education.

To select an ultimate term is not to say that conflicting meanings of that term do not exist. It is only to say that the term is abstract enough that all parties can agree to its use. It becomes a salve or glue to soothe or cement the various parties together in an overall universal philosophy. The term 'tradition' has multiple readings. Administrators define tradition as a consistent 122 year mission. Faculty read 'tradition' as liberal arts, "great ideas" and "best values". Alumni might read tradition as the same education they received and their parents received.

Students could share a negative reading of tradition. They may perceive the conflict between modernism and tradition, and postmodernism and global perspectives. The term "tradition" labels the conflicting power struggles and allows them to be subsumed by its abstraction. It is important to remember that Burke (1952) said, "Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division"(p.22). This eloquently allows for the dialectical tensions that exist between the voices subsumed under the ultimate term. The dialectical tensions that exist are subsumed by "tradition" so that the diverse motives of the various readers can be unified.

However, to identify and unify the multiple voices addressed in this mission statement with an ultimate term is not enough. In order to determine if the mission statement successfully unites the multiple voices we must, as Brummett (1982) suggests, make sure that all other terms provide a means to, and description of, the end or ultimate term. So, we list the species terms

that fit under the ultimate term. Words such as, prepare, serve, develop, foster, contribute, communicate, and provide. These are action words that the dominant 'haves' offer the 'have nots'. They are the means to the end--success from participation under the Drury tradition. Success, career, profession, strength and liberation are species terms of the 'have nots'--ends that are available under the ultimate term ""tradition". Here we find that the statement is successful. As Brummett (1982) suggests, if the various positions (voices) are not satisfied with the "means" and "ends" toward which the ultimate term directs them, the rhetoric is unsuccessful. In other words, if the "have nots" (students) position is not happy with the "means" by which they will receive the "ends" (success) then the mission statement is unsuccessful.

Faculty may read the concept of practical / theoretical knowledge much differently than do businesses but they are able to transcend their differences for an end goal. Faculty read the importance of values, critical thinking, great ideas, and imaginative faculties as higher than and separate from successful careers. Again they are able to unify under the ultimate term "tradition". However, the faculty must agree on the "means" also. If for example the pedagogical debate over literary canon is skirted too closely in the rhetoric of the mission statement, the faculty may not agree with the "means" of the rhetoric.

The only time the mission statement is less than successful is when it joins the ultimate term too closely with concrete terms that are highly contestable. When the ultimate term is paired with the term "Western" or "Judeo-Christian" or "liberal arts" the document becomes overt in the power structures that originate the rhetoric.

Probably one of the most interesting areas of multiplicity is in the tension between "Judeo-Christian tradition" , "Western tradition", "liberal arts tradition" and the postmodern

perspectives that echo from today's universities. In the final section of the mission statement..."To become a model of a global community...." the multiple authors, meanings and contexts that bring the text into existence compete at the highest level. It is in this section that the multiple position of the college is exemplified. The mission statement devours itself. The text states "Judeo-Christian" tradition and then talks the postmodern values of diversity, environment, interrelatedness, and community. By connecting "tradition" with "Western" the mission statement gives power to a structure that"traditionally" means white, male, Anglo-Saxon protestant. Here the rhetoric fails to unify. It tries to suggest a focus on diversity of culture, language and experience but cannot accomplish the fete. The ultimate term is trashed by its connection with the concrete. Here, one of the conflicts that mark higher education today surfaces.

The struggles between liberal arts and professional schools, the canon debate, interdepartmental power struggles, diversity and segregation, business and community, and faculty and administration all our submerged just below the surface of the rhetoric of higher education. The debates and changes that are taking place in American colleges and universities today are eminently important to the survival of these institutions. It is difficult to form a mission statement or any rhetoric that does not in some way present that struggle.

The question is, how well do the authors of the text prepare readers for the value shift that is necessary for the survival of the university?--the shift from modern to postmodern culture. Important to realize here is that the institution has not fully accepted the shift. They cling to "tradition" and boast of change. Here, we see that universities might need to "reconstruct" "tradition" to provide a new concept under which to unify their multiple voices.

In the mission statement student readers are asked to accept both value systems. They are subsumed under the ultimate term where all competing voices reside. Students, faculty, administration, all of the many voices heard within and outside the university are asked to participate with the institution as it tries to balance the tensions of the shift from modern to postmodern culture and the demands such a culture places on its participants. For example, businesses understand the global, environmental, and community emphasis of postmodernism but cling to profit margins and practicality of modernism.

In presenting a text to serve multiple readers, the authors dilute their message. Occupying a dual position of change and tradition. They stand uncommitted. The authors of the text, as Hyde (1993) describes, "presented the unpresentable" (p.597). The unpresentable conflict of shifting values in the university and outside world is presented in the mission statement.

As Hyde (1993) suggests, the mission statement is "inviting" (p.605). The statement is as Hyde (1993) describes a "type of rhetorical experiment intended to produce.....a wide range understanding of the issue" (p.605). The "uncertainty and ambiguity" of the text "calls for response and debate" (Hyde, 1993, pp. 605). In this sense the text is successful. Yet at the same time the text stifles the multiple voices, by employing the ultimate term.

It is I guess, not surprising that the text produces perceptions of dilution and success simultaneously. It is a statement after all, of itself. If that is the case then, Is the consubstantiality of the ultimate term "tradition" a holdover from the rational paradigm that postmodernism struggles against? Is one aspect of the shift from modern to postmodern culture that we no longer share "tradition?"

Hyde (1993) notes that postmodern texts are designed to "give readers back what is given

to them: controversy, crisis, rhetoric, uncertainty" (p.606). This design emphasizes critical thinking and reflects the university and our culture. In this light, the mission statement of Drury College is successful in its presentation of self. Even without knowing the pre-meditation of the authors, we can confer success to their efforts. They have constructed a true postmodern text.

With the pressures that colleges and universities face in our changing culture understanding the roots of the rhetoric they produce will provide administrators and faculty insight and guidance in developing their future. A quote from Bloland (1995) suggests a fitting conclusion to this analysis:

> "The modernist orientation is to resolve problems; the postmodern perspective not only points to the contradictions in discourses, but makes a virtue of preserving that essential tension. This would mean that institutions of higher education must be able to sustain and cope permanently with considerable unresolved conflict and contradiction" (p.551).

If Bloland (1995) is accurate in his assessment of higher education, then those involved in the production of the rhetoric of higher education must realize the rhetorical implications that offer them either success or failure as they present themselves to the multiple voices that constitute our postmodern society.

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